

THE ISSUE OF THE HOUR.

Prof. L. M. Hershaw Delivers a Scholarly Argument Before Second Baptist Lyceum on the Constitutional, Commercial and Political Aspects of the Porto Rican Tariff.—A Meeting Full of "Ginger."

If any one doubts the interest of the Negro in all the great issues of the hour, whether they directly bear upon the race problem or not, they should have been present last Sunday afternoon at the Second Baptist Lyceum. The Porto Rican tariff question was up for consideration, with that scholarly and well-posted young thinker and economist Prof. L. M. Hershaw as orator of the day. An audience that tested the capacity of the spacious lecture room listened attentively throughout the address, and to say that it was highly instructive, interesting and edifying, would be but a faint description of its excellent character. A subject that might have proven dry as dust in other hands, was given a treatment that was profound and exhaustive, clear as a bell, and which laid bare with primer-like simplicity the most complex problem that has vexed this nation since the Declaration of Independence.

President R. W. Thompson introduced Prof. Hershaw in a felicitous manner, and pointed to his record and achievements, his superior intellect and high character as examples of the fact that this day and generation, like that which followed the civil war, is furnishing thoughtful young men, who are taking their places at the front of public affairs, and bringing to bear a potent influence in solving the problems that year by year the masses are called upon to face. He stated that he had selected the subject because the educational system followed by the Second Baptist Lyceum demanded that great questions be discussed at a time when the popular mind was most deeply concerned, and when an expression of sentiment might be of some real service to the nation. He had selected Prof. Hershaw to present the subject because he had confidence in his ability, in his honesty and his capacity to condense a powerful constitutional argument into the smallest compass, with the maximum preservation of thought and information. Prof. Hershaw is a Georgian, a post-graduate at law, and a close student of political economy.

Prof. Hershaw spoke of the peculiar position this country assumes toward the recently acquired territory; of the Supreme Court in reference to the construction of the Constitution and that it had been decided that all territory over which the United States has jurisdiction comes within the purview of the Constitution and is as much a part of the United States as if it were Alaska, Arizona, Indian Territory or Oklahoma. He pointed out the danger that might come to the District of Columbia if the idea should be upheld that the term "United States" embraced only the territory of the several states which formed the Union. The District of Columbia would be outside the Union, and subject to the customs duties, and denied the privileges and immunities guaranteed to the states by the Constitution. \* \*

He did not believe a tariff law of the kind proposed would stand the test of a Supreme Court inquiry. He expressed faith in the honesty and generosity of the American people, and believed that when the mists of martial confusion had passed away, and the sober second thought should come to the land, all the problems growing out of the Span-

ish-American war, for which we had no precedent to guide us, would be solved on just and equitable lines. At the conclusion of Prof. Hershaw's admirable address, he was roundly applauded.

The discussion from the floor was one of the ablest ever heard before this lyceum, and was full of "ginger" from beginning to end, and the time for closing came all too soon. Mr. Theodore F. Price, a popular white resident of the District, opened, and gave an interesting dissertation upon the demand for a foreign market, but argued strongly for free trade with Porto Rica and all of America's new dependencies. Editor T. Thomas Fortune made a vigorous speech in which he denounced the sugar and tobacco trusts for their cupidity, and hoped our government would one day cease to be led away from the right principles of our fathers and the founders of the republic at the behest of the money-changers, robbers, thieves and hypocrites who dealt with the honor of the country and bartered human life with as little compunction as clipping coupons or watering railroad stock. Col. W. A. Pledger captivated the crowd by one of his humorous talks. He promised to stand with the majority of the republican party on the Porto Rican question when the matter should come up before the national convention and he believed that the right would prevail. He will support the nominee of the Philadelphia convention, whoever he may be, and is now for McKinley, because he is the choice of the majority of the party. Recorder H. P. Cheatham was enthusiastically called, and in his usual polished manner expressed his sympathy for all people struggling for liberty and advancement, and felt confident that out of the present tangle a happy solution would come, and that the inhabitants of Porto Rico would hold in reverent memory the day that General Miles landed on the Island, and promised in the name of the American flag that there should come to them all the opportunities for exalted civilization and progress embodied in our Magna Charta, the Constitution, that had been enjoyed by American citizens for more than a hundred years. Lieut. R. E. Toomey made a ringing talk, in which he urged that the names of the old leaders like Douglass, Bruce, Langston, Lynch, Cuney and Pinchback should never be passed over in silence when mentioned in a popular audience. On his motion, a vote of thanks was tendered Prof. Hershaw and those who participated in the exercises. The singing of Misses Georgia Smith and Georgia Makell was excellent, and was received with many evidences of appreciation.

Tomorrow at 3 30 p. m., Senator William E. Mason, of Illinois.

The Singing Class.

Leader Hoffman stated to an American reporter that directly after last season's Festival the Elementary Singing Class was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, to be known by name as "The Washington Permanent Chorus," but not until after this year's festival by the Advanced Sight Singing Class (Damosch System) will they assume the above title. A brilliant programme is promised. Hoffman's band will be increased to forty members. The big orchestra to accompany the chorus will consist of twenty-five musicians. It is expected that Mr. Harry T. Burleigh, the great basso of New York, who was a classmate of Mr. Hoffman while at the National Conservatory of Music, will

render two solos. Altogether without doubt this will eclipse last year's festival which was the most successful ever launched in Washington.

Late Locals.

Mr. D. B. McCary, cashier of the Capital Savings Bank, who has been indisposed for the past few days, is up and at his desk again.

Ex Governor P. B. S. Pinchback, who has been attending the Mardi Gras in New Orleans and who, while there, was commissioned by the National Afro-American Council and by a committee of prominent citizens of this city to look into the Louisiana Suffrage Law, has returned to the city. The Governor is in prime condition and has been greatly benefitted by his trip South. A full report will be given of his work in connection with the Louisiana law in a subsequent issue.

Lawyer Thomas L. Jones, the eloquent Virginian, is adding new laurels to his reputation because of the successful manner in which he conducts his murder cases. In the case of Ashton, which was decided in his favor last week, the lawyers and spectators in the court room paid him a high tribute for the excellent manner in which the case was conducted. He saved Ashton's life. Mr. Jones has handled more than fifteen murder cases in the last six years and to his credit may it be said that he has not lost a single case. While he has not in every case succeeded in acquitting his clients, he has saved their lives. He has a bright future.

"A Trip to Coontown," by these masters of the Thespian art, Cole and Johnson, will be on the boards at the Academy next week. Both of these talented young men are well known in this city but have never been here with their own company. "A Trip to Coontown" is said to surpass even the magnificent show put up by Williams and Walker and a crowded house may be expected at the Academy every night next week. Manager Rapley says that there will be no discrimination as was the case at the New Grand last year when Williams and Walker were here and those who know the Rapleys who manage the New National and the Academy know what to expect.

Mrs. Nellie Bundy nee Tate, arrived in the city last week from Circleville, Ohio, to join her husband, M. M. J. Bundy, who has accepted a place in the Supply Division of the Post Office Department. They will reside permanently in Washington.

Mr. Lewis H. Douglass, who has been up in Eastern New York for two weeks, has returned to the city.

Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie Scott celebrated their eighteenth anniversary Friday, March 16th at their cozy residence on Second street, s. w. Mr. Scott is one of Washington's enterprising undertakers and counts his friends by the score. A large number of friends were in attendance and the evening was pleasantly spent. A large number of presents were sent in and but for the lack of space a list of presents as well as of the guests would be printed in full.

The National Colored Teachers' Bureau. Registration free, teachers wanted. Address J. G. Clayton, Md., secretary, 459 C street, n. w.

Rev. Dr. S. W. Smith of Princeton, the N. J., editor of the Christian Banner, passed through the city this week en route to Richmond, Va., and other cities in the South.

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